# Brazilian Standards and Conformity Assessment

## Standards in Brazil

Brazil's efforts to establish uniform measurements and standards began as early as 1862, when the French decimal metric system became official. With industrial growth during the following century came the necessity to create more efficient measuring instruments for consumer protection. As a result, in 1961 the National Institute of Weights and Measures (INPM) was created.

In 1973, industrial production reached a level that new avenues were opened for manufactured good exports. With a focus on exports, Brazil needed to adopt qualitative and quantitative methods comparable to those in other industrialized countries. Thus, in 1973, the National Institute of Metrology, Standardization and Industrial Quality (INMETRO) was born with the objective to improve the quality of life of all citizens and the competitiveness of all industry through the use of metrology and improved quality.

## Organization of Standards Bodies in Brazil

In 1973, Brazilian Federal law established a National System of Metrology, Standardization and Industrial Quality, SINMETRO, which is comprised of CONMETRO, INMETRO, ABNT, IPEM and accredited labs. INMETRO serves as the executive chair of SINMETRO.

## Standards and Technical Regulations

Under SINMETRO, the development of voluntary standards is the responsibility of the Brazilian Association of Technical Standards (ABNT). ABNT is a private, non-governmental, not-for-profit organization that develops standards across all industries in Brazil. ABNT represents the country in relevant international and regional forums and acts as a certification body. Brazilian standards are developed either through ABNT's own technical committees or through Sectoral Standardization Bodies (ONS), which it accredits. ABNT annually publishes a National Standardization Plan, containing all of the titles it plans to develop throughout the year. It can only be accessed by a member of ABNT or by contacting the corresponding Brazilian Committee (ABNT/CB): www.abnt.org.br/normal_comite.htm. Proposed voluntary standards that are open for public comments can be accessed through: www.abnt.org.br/normal_consulpub.htm.

Voluntary standards can be adopted as mandatory technical regulations by any of the 9 Ministries. Alternatively, these Ministries may develop their own technical regulations. Brazil's technical regulations are available through INMETRO's website. This website provides access to both proposed and final technical regulations: www.inmetro.gov.br/rtac/.

Brazil is a signatory of the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) of the World Trade Organization (WTO), affirming its obligations relative to standards, technical regulations, and conformity assessment procedures. Under the agreement, INMETRO was established as the national inquiry point for information on standards-related issues. Additional information about technical barriers to trade and a formal system for inquiries is available through INMETRO at www.inmetro.gov.br/barreirastecnicas/index.asp

## Standards: First Analog, now Digital TV?

Brazil is considered a standards developer, and its choices often influence its neighbors' decisions. One can see Brazil's activity in standards in its current efforts in digital television (DTV) technical regulation. While a number of countries in the Western Hemisphere are adopting the US standard (ATSC), Brazil has spent millions of dollars

studying various options ranging from the adoption of one of the three existing DTV standards (U.S., European, Japanese), the development of its own technical regulation, or some combination of these. A uniform DTV standard throughout the hemisphere will result in lower consumer costs for all. The US Government has voiced concern that the selection process is not fully transparent, and that Brazil's DTV choice may not be compatible with ATSC. The US Government is continuing to work on this issue, urging Brazil to select the standard that offers the best technology at the lowest cost. There is cause for concern; Brazil developed the Pal-M standard for analog television, which is not used by any other country in the world and is incompatible with PAL or NTSC.

## Conformity Assessment

Conformity assessment includes all activities needed to demonstrate compliance with specified requirements relating to a technical regulation or voluntary standard. In Brazil, the conformity assessment system follows ISO guidelines. Conformity assessment includes test and calibration laboratories, product certification bodies, accreditation bodies, inspection and verification units, quality system registrars, and others. Conformity assessment can be voluntary or mandatory (done through a legal instrument to protect the consumer on issues related to life, health and environment). Interested U.S. parties can be accredited by INMETRO to perform conformity assessment activities.

## Test and Calibration Laboratories

INMETRO accredits test and calibration laboratories authorized to operate in Brazil. The following link provides information on Brazil's accredited calibration laboratories: www.inmetro.gov.br/laboratorios/rbc/. One can search for accredited test laboratories at the following website: http://www.inmetro.gov.br/laboratorios/rble/

## Product Certification

**Mandatory Testing and Mandatory Product Certification**

For regulated products, the relevant government agency generally requires that entities engaged in product testing and mandatory certification be accredited by INMETRO. Generally, testing must be performed in-country, unless the necessary capability does not exist in Brazil.

INMETRO is a signatory to the mutual recognition arrangement (MRA) of the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), which can facilitate acceptance of test results from US laboratories that are accredited by US organizations who are also signatories. For a complete list of MRAs to which INMETRO belongs, visit the following website: http://www.inmetro.gov.br/english/international/mutual.asp.

A complete list of products subject to mandatory certification: www.inmetro.gov.br/qualidade/prodCompulsorios.asp

**Non-Mandatory Testing and Product Certification**

There is no legal mandate to date to retest non-regulated products that have been approved in their country of origin. For non-regulated products, some US marks and product certification may be accepted. As with all voluntary standards, any certification that may be required in non-regulated sectors is a contractual matter to be decided between buyer and seller. Market forces and preferences often lead to the need for a specific certification.
To facilitate US product acceptance in Brazil by recognizing existing certifications, agreements between US and local certifiers/testing houses are encouraged. Also, there is no impediment for the establishment of US certification organizations in Brazil.

If your product has been certified in the US or Europe, it probably will not need to be re-certified (see MRA above). If your product is not certified, please refer to the mandatory product certification link.
A list of certified products (both mandatory and voluntary) in Brazil is available at the following website:
www.inmetro.gov.br/prodcert/Produtos/busca.asp

## Accreditation and Quality System Registration

The General Coordination for Accreditation (CGCRE) of INMETRO is responsible for accrediting certification bodies, quality system registrars, inspection bodies, product verification and training bodies, as well as testing and calibration laboratories. Information about accreditation requirements and currently accredited bodies is available at www.inmetro.gov.br/credenciamento/index.asp.

## Labeling/Marking Requirements

The Brazilian Customer Protection code, in effect since September 12, 1990, requires that product labels provide consumers with correct, clear, precise, and easily readable information about the product's quality, quantity, composition, price, guarantee, shelf life, origin, and risks to the consumer's health and safety. Imported products should bear a Portuguese translation, and all products should use the official metric units or show a metric equivalent. The US Senate Concurrent Resolution nº 40 adopted July 30, 1953, invites US exporters to inscribe, on external shipping containers and in indelible print of a suitable size, "United States of America." Although such marking is not compulsory under law, US shippers are urged to follow this procedure in publicizing US-made goods.

## Other Comments

Brazil is a member of the Mercosul trading block, which has its own regional standards organization that issues and harmonizes standards. Technical committees write and recommend standards in selected areas. Each country must ratify the standard before they are adopted in that country. A number of standards have already been adopted as Mercosul standards. Adopted and proposed Mercosul standards are listed on Mercosul's website: www.amn.org.br. The Executive Secretariat of the Mercosul Standards Organization is located in São Paulo, Brazil.

For more reports on standards in other countries, please visit Export.gov's site for US Commercial Service Market Research Worldwide: www.export.gov/marketresearch
• American Embassy in Brasília: www.embaixadaamericana.org.br
• ABNT - Associação Brasileira de Normas Técnicas: www.abnt.org.br
• AMN - Asociacion Mercosul de Normalizacion: www. amn.org.br
• Brazil's Ministry of Development and Commerce: www.desenvolvimento.gov.br/
**For information on the WTO-TBT inquiry point, contact:**
• INMETRO – Instituto Nacional de Metrologia, Normalização e Qualidade Industrial: www.inmetro.gov.br

**Information resources on labeling:**
IPEM – Institute of Weights and Measures: www.ipem.sp.gov.br
CVS – Center for Sanitation Vigilance: www.cvs.saude.sp.gov.br

**Resources**
USCS Brazil's reports on Top Prospects for US exporters: www.focusbrazil.org.br/ccg
USCS Brazil's Guide to Marketing Services: www.buyusa.gov/brazil.
US Trade Information Center (TIC) for tariff information: www.ita.doc.gov/td/tic/tariff/.
US Trade Representative's Office for information on FTAA and trade disputes: www.ustr.gov/Trade_Agreements/Regional/FTAA/Section_Index.html.
Government of Brazil's customs site: www.receita.fazenda.gov.br/Grupo1/Aduana.asp
Government of Brazil's SISCOMEX customs site: http://www.receita.fazenda.gov.br/aduana/siscomex/siscomex.htm
With offices in Brasilia, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte & Porto Alegre, the US Commercial Service Brazil (www.buyusa.gov/brazil) helps US exporters enter Brazil's market through research, matchmaking and advocacy. To the best of our knowledge the information in this report is accurate - however readers should conduct their own due diligence before entering into business ventures. *